

## THE NEW COURTS OF LAW.

We mentioned last week, the report of the committee appointed to consider this matter, and pointed out the site suggested by Mr. Barry for the new building. Recurring to this document, we should first mention that the report itself is very short, being nothing more nor less than this:—That the Select Committee appointed to consider &c., "Have examined evidence on the subject of the matters referred to them, and have agreed to report such evidence to the House."

Mr. Barry considers it impossible to re-construct the present Courts of Law so as to provide sufficient accommodation, and does not know of any other site in Westminster that could be set apart for the new courts. It was suggested that the south side of Bridge-street might be removed, and New Palace-yard converted into a quadrangle, by extending the present clock tower of the Houses of Parliament along the present site of the houses removed, so as to afford accommodation therein for the courts, but Mr. Barry did not consider they could be efficiently arranged there. The removal of the old courts would promote very materially the effect of the new building; and the quadrangle was desirable though the new courts could not form part of it. "At the present moment," said Mr. Barry, "there is no principal or striking entrance to the new palace for the public. The only great entrance is the state entrance to the House of Lords, reserved exclusively for the use of her Majesty. There is no situation in which a main public entrance could be so convenient, or have so good an effect as at the north-west corner of the proposed quadrangle enclosing New Palace-yard. If the quadrangle were added to the building, it would be only necessary to secure this entrance gateway, in order to render the building more secure from external attack in case of public commotions. The building, as now designed, could be effectually protected towards the river, but it will be very much unprotected on the other sides."

The Victoria Tower, it is found, will not be sufficient to accommodate the public records, and the Master of the Rolls objects to their being placed in the roofs, which have been in some degree prepared for them.

The plan of the building to be erected on the site in the Strand (described in our last) would be very much like what he proposed some years ago when the centre of Lincoln's-Inn Fields was talked of as the site, now put quite out of the question. "The accommodation would be for twelve or fourteen courts, each with a judges' room, a clerks' room, and ante-room, barristers' room, and solicitors' room; and in the common law courts, in addition to this accommodation, a room for the jury. It would include also, a room for the grand jury, a law library, consultation rooms, a refreshment room, a great central hall, communicating with the whole of the courts and their appurtenances, for the accommodation of the public; and private lobbies, and communications for the convenience of the judges and the bar. The courts would be arranged around the great central hall, and towards the exterior of the building, surrounding the courts, would be arranged all the private accommodation connected with the courts respectively."

The style of the new building would be altogether different from that first proposed. "I should say that it would be desirable that it should be in the mediæval style of architecture, and that the loftier building is made, provided no practical inconvenience results from the height, the better will be the external effect. In the exterior of the building I should propose four stories; the centre of the building would be lower, and the great hall and surrounding courts would be lighted entirely from above."

The cost Mr. Barry estimated at 300,000*l.* The Strand would be widened to 100 feet. Part of the building would be in the city. Temple Bar would be detached and not in the middle of the road, but might remain.

Mr. R. L. Jones in his evidence, described some improvements contemplated by the city. "It is proposed to commence from the corner of Cheapside, at the west end of Cheapside, and to take down the whole block of building on the north side of St. Paul's, and thence going across the Old Bailey, through the site of the Fleet Prison, crossing Farringdon-

street, up to Little New-street, and thence up to Fetter-lane, which joins the Rolls estate, taking another diagonal line into the wide part of Holborn, which would be the means of relieving Holborn-hill, as to which a loud complaint has so long been made, because we have ascertained that the acclivities from the point at the west end of St. Paul's churchyard will be no more than Ludgate-street or Fleet-street, about one in thirty."

He thought the city would insist on boundary gates, but did not consider they would object to removing the present gates (Temple Bar), and substituting others.

Mr. William Cadogan, surveyor, had made the estimates in conjunction with Mr. Barry. "The sum required for the purchase of this property is 675,074*l.* The value of the frontage of the ground that will be to be let, I have estimated at 316,500*l.*, which will leave, of course, to be provided for, a sum of 358,574*l.* Then, as a set-off against that, as a deduction from that sum, there are a great many houses now used by Government as being their property, which will sell for a large sum of money, and will go in reduction of this last sum; because if these courts are built, those offices that they now use would become unnecessary."

The valuation was made house by house: some were taken at twenty-five years' purchase, some at twenty, and some as low as eighteen. As to the ground-rents to be obtained for frontages attached to the new courts, to be let for chambers, witness had put from five guineas a foot to three guineas.

## DIVIDING WALLS IN BUILDINGS OF THE WAREHOUSE CLASS.

MODIFICATION OF METROPOLITAN BUILDINGS ACT.

UNDER the clause in the Buildings Act which gives her Majesty's Commissioners of Works and Works power to modify its rules, already referred to in our columns on other occasions,\* the following (the third) alteration has been made:—

"Whereas the official referees have by their report in writing, bearing date the 4th day of August, 1845, certified to us that it is their opinion that the rule of the said Act, in schedule C, part 4, videlicet:—With regard to any building of the second class hereafter built or rebuilt, in reference to the capacity or contents thereof within the same inclosing walls:—

If such building contains more than 200,000 cubic feet, then such building must be divided by party-walls, so that there be not in any one part of such building more than 200,000 cubic feet without party-walls,"—is inapplicable to many warehouses, workshops, and manufactories, and to certain sheds or covered places; and that in respect thereto, the objects of the said Act will be as effectually attained by the adoption of the modification of the said rule hereinafter directed.

And whereas the official referees have also stated in such report the grounds of such their opinion, and on the investigation thereof it appears to us, the said commissioners, that such opinion is well founded. Now we, the undersigned, two of the Commissioners of Works and Buildings, pursuant to, and in exercise of the power in that behalf given to us by the said recited Act, do direct that the modification so recommended, may be made in the rules prescribed by the said Act, by inserting after the first rule of schedule C, part 4, above quoted, the following words, videlicet:—

"Provided always with regard to warehouses, workshops, and manufactories, or to parts thereof, used exclusively for the storing, working, or manufacturing of iron, brass, lead stone, or other incombustible materials, and containing one story only (except any brick or stone vaulted cellars) and having no timber floor, and having no ceiling in or under the roof thereof, in reference to the capacity or contents thereof within the same inclosing walls;—

And with regard to sheds or covered places, used for unloading, transferring, and reloading goods in course of transit, and not as warehouses for the storing or warehousing of goods, in reference to the capacity or contents thereof within the same inclosing walls;—

\* See p. 327 ante, to permit use of Dr. Arnold's ventilating valve; and p. 446, as to construction of small buildings.

That if it be found necessary or convenient for the purposes or uses of any such warehouse, workshop, or manufactory, or of any such shed, or covered place, that the same should not be divided by party-walls, so as that there be not in any one part thereof more than two hundred thousand cubic feet without party-walls,—Then so long as the same shall be used for the purposes aforesaid, and no longer, it shall not be necessary so to divide the same by party-walls, but every such warehouse, workshop, or manufactory, and every such shed or covered place, shall be subject as to its external and party-walls, and as to its internal divisions, and as to the application of iron doors thereto, and as to its arrangement and construction in every respect, to the special approval of the official referees, in the same manner as is required in respect of the walls and other constructions of buildings of the third class, and the said official referees are hereby required to have regard to the circumstances of each particular case, as to the locality and neighbourhood thereof."

Which modification being made in such rules will in our opinion give effect to the purposes of the said Act, as witness our hands this 26th day of September, 1845.—(Signed)

LINCOLN, } Commissioners of Works  
A. MILNE, } and Buildings."

## AWARDS UNDER BUILDINGS ACT.

## CUTTINGS INTO CHIMNEYS.

THE provision in schedule F, that no chimney-shaft, jamb, flue, or breast, shall be cut into for any other than two or three specified purposes, caused unnecessary inconvenience to many parties. Some time ago we published an award by the referees on this point,\* which served to shew that when the cutting away was securely done, was not dangerous as regards fire, and the wall was entirely within the same premises, they would permit it. Since then, they have made several other awards in the same spirit, the heads of which we subjoin.

Mr. Stuteley, on the part of Mr. Robb, was about to rebuild 79, St. Martin's-lane, and wished to form a mezzanine over the shop, whereby the chimney openings of each story upwards would become above the level of the respective floors. The district surveyor, Mr. Kendall, considered himself unable to assent to such alterations in the breasts, as were required to bring the chimney openings level with the respective floors.

The award was:—"That it is competent to the said Martin Joseph Stuteley to alter the level of the respective openings in the said chimney-breasts of the said house, but in so doing, the backs of the existing chimney-openings, or fire-places must not be cut into, nor the wities of any of the flues cut away, except where the new fire-places will be formed, nor the backs of any of the flues be cut into for any purpose; and that the backs of all the new chimney-openings or fire-places must, where the brickwork shall be found to be less than 8½ inches in thickness, be rebuilt of that thickness; and that any and all new work must be built with sound bricks laid in and with cement, and that the alterations in question must be made conformably with the rules in schedule F, of the Metropolitan Buildings Act."

The costs to be paid by Mr. Robb.

Again:—Mr. May of 66, Oxford-street, desired to enlarge his house by removing the chimney-breast on the shop story, and to support the superstructure by iron columns and breastsummers in a secure and fire-proof manner. The award was:—"That inasmuch as the wall in which the said chimney-stack exists is an internal wall, and as the said chimney-stack is proposed to be carried by sufficient iron girders, supported on sufficient iron standards of the full width of the chimney-stack, that is to say, 1 foot and 11 inches; and as the bearing of the said standards is to be upon York stone plinths, distributing the weight over the old brickwork of the chimney-stack in the first or basement story, which is not of less width or thickness than the chimney-stack above, the same will not be contrary to the said Act, and may be done in accordance with the (said annexed) drawing marked C."

The costs to be paid by Mr. May.

\* p. 327, ante.